

Conviction Would Bar Pension

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President Nixon, already under financial pressure over income taxes owed the government and payments on his San Clemente property, stands to suffer a series of major financial blows if the House impeaches him and the Senate finds him guilty. He could escape the losses if he resigned.

In addition to losing his \$200,000 a year presidential salary, Mr. Nixon if impeached and convicted would automatically:

- Lose the right to receive a \$60,000-a-year lifetime special presidential pension which is payable to all former Presidents except those ousted from office under the impeachment procedure.

- Lose the right to up to \$96,000 a year in government payments for staff salaries and for allowances, for office assistance for the rest of his life.

- Lose the right to obtain free office space for himself and his staff for the rest of his life, paid for by the government.

- Forfeit the right of his wife, Patricia Nixon, to receive a \$20,000-a-year widow's pension.

Mr. Nixon's troubles, however, wouldn't stop with that. There would be some possibility that, having been found guilty by the Senate of "high crimes and misdemeanors" and removed from the presidency, he might be disbarred from the practice of law and thus cut off from further sources of income from his profession.

Although the President under those circumstances could probably still earn substantial amounts of money by writing memoirs of his tumultuous presidential years, the financial penalties of impeachment and conviction would represent a severe loss of anticipated income.

Despite ownership of substantial real estate at Key Biscayne and San Clemente, Mr. Nixon is already having some financial troubles aris-

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ing out of the Watergate scandal and his own tax affairs. After the Internal Revenue Service and the congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation reopened his 1969-72 tax returns, he was billed for \$467,000 in back taxes and interest. He still owes about \$140,000 on this tax bill for the year 1969.

Two weeks ago, it was reported that Mr. Nixon was unable to meet a \$226,440 payment on his San Clemente property and was seeking refinancing to ease the financial pressure.

Now, he is in a position to lose major lifetime guaranteed income from the government.

The special presidential pension law was first passed in 1958. At that time it granted \$25,000 a year to an ex-President in what amounts to a pension for his own living expenses, in order to avert any possibility that a man who had held the nation's highest honor would be forced to undertake demeaning tasks to support himself in his old age. It also provided for free office space plus \$50,000 for an office staff, and further stipulated that the widow of a former President receive \$10,000 a year for life.

These figures have been repeatedly increased, and the presidential annual pen-

sion was raised to the equal of a Cabinet officer's salary (\$60,000 at present), the staff allowances to \$96,000 and the widow's pension to \$20,000 in 1970 and 1971.

However, the law specifies that these benefits won't be available to anyone removed from the presidency "pursuant to Section 4 of Article II of the Constitution"—the impeachment and conviction section.

Even if impeached and convicted the President apparently would still be eligible for certain other benefits governed by other laws: the right to any civil service retirement benefits or Social Security benefits earned through jobs other than the presidency; the right to Secret Service protection as long as he wants, and the right to send nonpolitical mail free.

Potential civil service retirement benefits are entirely separate from the special \$60,000 presidential pension. Even if ousted from office, Mr. Nixon, based on his years of service as a House and Senate member (1947-53) and Vice President (1953 to 1961), might be eligible for about \$18,000-a-year civil service retirement pension, assuming he paid into the retirement system during those years. But this would be a pittance compared to the much larger benefits he stands to lose.